

Serving the Phillips community for over 75 years with Christ's love through practical care, discipleship, and the lasting hope of Jesus Christ.

A VISION FOR THE CHILDREN OF PHILLIPS

Frederick Douglass once said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." That conviction has long shaped the ministry of the Marie Sandvik Center, which has a deep history of ministering to children. At one time, there were more than 300 kids a day at the Center's summer day camp. Today, we long to see children return to the Center.

For many years, I watched college students walk the neighborhood, inviting children to come. The children of the Phillips neighborhood, the poorest neighborhood in Minneapolis, are suffering. Surrounded by drugs, crime, addiction, and homeless encampments, the situation is urgent. Minneapolis is often described as a "thriving" city, but for many children in Phillips, nothing could be further from the truth.

We know the only true hope is Jesus Christ, and that conviction has led us to a renewed vision we call Kid Zone. Instead of a drug zone or a crime zone, why not a Kid Zone? Our goal is to make the neighborhood safe for children, youth, and families: a place where children can grow, play, learn, and hear the gospel. Just yards from our building is a program that allows addicts to legally use drugs in public. Imagine children growing up surrounded by addiction and hopelessness. We believe the cycle can be broken. Our goal is to erase generations of poverty, crime, and despair through the power of the gospel and the love of Jesus.

By God's grace, the kids are beginning to return. We are launching new programs, starting Bible studies for high school students, providing job training, and helping families in need with food and support. The challenge is big, but so is our vision. God bless you for your partnership with us as we labor to bring the gospel to the children of Phillips.



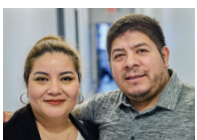
*From the Executive Director,
Pastor Walt McFadden*

CARING FOR SINGLE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS

This Mother's Day, the Marie Sandvik Center hosted a special celebration for single mothers and widows in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Women and children gathered together for food, games, fellowship, and encouragement.

Through the Hispanic Family Ministry, we regularly meet women facing deep challenges: single mothers raising children alone, families struggling financially, broken marriages, and women carrying heavy burdens with little support. Many come to the Center first because of practical needs like food, baby supplies, or hygiene products, but over time those moments become relationships. Throughout the week, Lorena visits homes, prays with women, reads Scripture together, and walks alongside families in crisis. Our desire is not only to meet physical needs, but to share the hope and healing found in Jesus Christ.

Events like this Mother's Day celebration remind these women that they are seen, loved, and not forgotten. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve families in Phillips and to continue building relationships that open doors for the gospel.



*From the Hispanic
Family Ministry
Directors, Yuri and
Lorena Reinoso*



A GROWING SEASON FOR ICAN

This spring has been a meaningful season for iCan. Our largest class yet began in March with 27 high school students enrolled, including many returning students and students from a wide range of non-majority cultures and language backgrounds. Each Tuesday, students gather after school for a meal, conversation, and practical workshops focused on communication, interviewing, financial literacy, and workplace skills.

Many of the students we serve have experienced instability, disrupted schooling, or inconsistent support systems over the last several years. One of the greatest needs we continue to see is consistency. Week after week, volunteers and staff show up to build trust and lasting relationships. Dan Minell shared, “We want to meet immediate needs in a way that creates an entry point into relationship.” What makes iCan unique is that students are not simply taught job skills. They are invited into a community where adults share their own stories, struggles, and faith. Students learn how to communicate who they are with confidence, while also discovering strengths they may never have recognized in themselves. Through peer and mentor encouragement, they grow in confidence and hope for the future.

This term also marked the expansion of iCan 2.0, which focused on financial literacy and stewardship. Students learned practical tools for managing money while continuing to grow in maturity and confidence. We are grateful to see the Lord at work through these relationships and encouraged by the number of returning students continuing in the program.

Please pray that the seeds planted through faithful relationships and biblical mentorship would continue to bear fruit in the lives of these students.

From Dan and Debby Minell

MORE THAN MARTIAL ARTS

So far this year, the Valor Jiu Jitsu program has continued to grow as children from the Phillips neighborhood gather each week for training, mentorship, and gospel-centered encouragement. Through Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and relationships with coaches, students are growing physically, emotionally, and spiritually in a community where they are known and cared for.

For many of the children involved, life outside the gym can be marked by instability, trauma, loss, or broken relationships. On the mats, they are learning perseverance, self-control, and respect while also learning how to process failure and grow in confidence. Coaches walk closely with students each week, reminding them that they are valued and created with purpose.

Short “mat chats” and Bible lessons continue to open doors for conversations about identity, forgiveness, faithfulness, and the hope found in Christ. This kind of life transformation doesn’t happen outside of relationships. Through these consistent relationships, students hear the gospel and experience the love of Christ.

One highlight of the spring quarter was the recent Family Showcase and graduation celebration. Families gathered as students demonstrated what they had learned, received character awards from coaches, and were encouraged in front of their peers and families. We are grateful for the supporters whose generosity makes this ministry possible!

From Dave Omdal, CityJoy



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